

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

February 2, 2015  
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room  
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Balducci, Deputy Mayor Wallace, and Councilmembers Chelminiak, Lee, Robertson, Robinson, and Stokes

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

Councilmember Robertson opened the meeting at 6:01 p.m., and declared recess to Executive Session for approximately 45 minutes to discuss one item of potential litigation and one item of property disposition.

The meeting resumed at 7:10 p.m., with Mayor Balducci presiding.

2. Study Session

(a) Status of the Major Comprehensive Plan Update Project

City Manager Brad Miyake opened discussion regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update process.

Planning Director Dan Stroh opened staff's presentation and recalled the last briefing to the Council on this topic in September. The draft Comprehensive Plan Update is to be released for public comment next week.

Mr. Stroh highlighted the project objectives to fully capture the community's vision, address long-term needs, and to remain consistent with state law, regional plans and court decisions. A key objective of the update is to make the plan more accessible and usable so that it remains an effective tool. The update process has involved the public as well as six Boards and Commissions, the Bellevue Network on Aging, Youth Link, and others.

Mr. Stroh presented the project schedule, beginning with the February 11 release of the draft Comprehensive Plan Update. A joint meeting of Boards and Commissions and open house is scheduled for February 25, and a second open house is scheduled for February 26. An online open house will be provided as well. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the

draft Comprehensive Plan Update on March 4 and will review the document on March 11, 18 and 25. Council will review the Planning Commission's recommendations during April and May meetings, and Council action is anticipate on June 15.

Paul Inghram, Comprehensive Planning Manager, described the key changes and additions to the Comprehensive Plan. In response to Council direction, a new Neighborhood Element has been drafted and reviewed with the Planning Commission. The policies reinforce the importance of high-quality neighborhoods and protecting neighborhood character, frame how Neighborhood (Subarea) Plans are updated and how they relate to the overall Comprehensive Plan, and provide cross-references to other related policies.

Mr. Inghram said the Comprehensive Plan Vision has been expanded to ensure the plan components are working together and to align this vision with the Council Vision adopted last year.

Mr. Inghram described two subarea boundary issues addressed in the draft Comprehensive Plan Update. Members of the community were interested in restoring the Crossroads boundary to include the triangle area at NE Bel-Red Road and 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and in restoring the previous zoning for that parcel. However, a number of scenarios were analyzed and discussed, and the Planning Commission recommends maintaining the area within the Bel-Red Subarea Plan.

Mr. Inghram described three minor recommended revisions to the south Downtown boundary, which is irregular and includes some split parcels. The adjustments will straighten the boundary line to the extent possible and are consistent with the existing policy to maintain the boundary to prevent the spread of the Downtown into adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Mr. Inghram said the Utilities Element contains new policies related to the deployment of new power facilities, the undergrounding of existing power facilities, support for high-speed internet access, regional utilities, and wireless communication facilities. The City has heard interest from the public in citywide access to high-speed internet service and competitive internet provider options.

The Capital Facilities Element update addresses aging infrastructure, acknowledges the Capital Investment Program (CIP) as the primary infrastructure planning and funding tool, creates a clear link to facility system plans, and recognizes adopted Code standards regarding essential public facilities.

The Environmental Element adds policies addressing tree canopy restoration, the creation of partnerships for stream habitat and other restoration projects, life cycle management of resources, the promotion of greener buildings and infrastructure, and the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Inghram said revisions in the Comprehensive Plan Update attempt to synchronize the City's policies with the policy review required under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations. Recommended policies incorporate low impact development principles to support NPDES requirements as well.

Mr. Inghram said the Citizen Engagement Element enhances the focus on ensuring community involvement in planning and decision making. It adds two new policies regarding master planning for large public projects and new and emerging technologies for citizen engagement. The Housing Element adds policies encouraging housing for senior adults.

Mr. Inghram recalled suggestions from the Council and community to add a new Arts and Culture subsection under the Urban Design and the Arts Element. Proposed policies create three categories of urban design street treatments: City boulevards, scenic boulevards, and shopping streets. Additional policies create three types of intersection treatments: key City entry points, Neighborhood Identity points, and designated intersections.

Mr. Inghram reiterated that the draft Comprehensive Plan Update document will be released for public comment on February 11, and a joint meeting of the Boards and Commissions and open house is scheduled for February 25. Ongoing public outreach includes online and traditional open houses, print and social media, and presentations to community groups (e.g., Youth Link Board, Bellevue Network on Aging, and others).

The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing and conduct its review in March. The Council will review the Commission's recommendations in April and May, and is expected to take action on June 15 before the Update is submitted to the State.

Councilmember Stokes, Council liaison to the Planning Commission, said he is pleased to see the addition of the Neighborhoods Element and the expanded Comprehensive Plan Vision. He said the Commission heard from the public regarding power lines and other issues. Mr. Stokes said he looks forward to additional input from the public and the City's Boards and Commissions.

Councilmember Robertson thanked the Planning Commission for its work. She expressed support for the Neighborhoods Element and said she appreciates how it recognizes the varying characters of different neighborhoods. Regarding the Safe Community section, she suggested additional language beyond the reference to public safety accreditation. Mr. Inghram said the Planning Commission discussed that issue the previous week and is expected to make revisions.

Ms. Robertson expressed support for the Comprehensive Plan Vision, which aligns well with the Council Vision. She highlighted the addition of policies related to enhanced internet connectivity and the two boundary modifications (i.e., Downtown's southern border and Crossroads/Bel-Red triangle).

With regard to the Citizen Engagement Element, Ms. Robertson suggested adding policies supportive of citizen outreach in foreign languages and to households with cell phones only and no landlines. She wants to be sure the City is able to reach everyone. Ms. Robertson expressed support for the urban design street maps.

Councilmember Robinson commended the Planning Commission for the new Neighborhoods Element. She commented on the importance of the Housing Element as it relates to the Council's

priorities and to Bellevue's changing demographics. Ms. Robinson said she is pleased that the Comprehensive Plan addresses senior housing. She described the reasons she cares about affordable housing in Bellevue which relate to economic development, human services, transportation, neighborhoods, and the environment.

Councilmember Robinson requested Council support in asking that the Planning Commission include consideration of, and specific responses to, a number of questions as they enter into this next phase of public review of the draft Comprehensive Plan. These answers will provide the Council and the community with a clear understanding of the basis for the policies ultimately recommended by the Commission. These questions help reflect how the Commission's work addresses the original work program, which for the Housing Element included tasks to: "Coordinate updated needs assessment with the City's regional partner ARCH," and "Update policies on housing needs consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies."

Ms. Robinson asked that the Planning Commission transmittal include responses to the following:

- What are the new Countywide Planning Policy requirements and how are we fulfilling those requirements?
- What benchmarks are being used to demonstrate the existing need, and how will housing affordability to match incomes be addressed?
- How does the Housing Element set goals for addressing the countywide need for housing affordable to households with moderate, low and very low income?

Councilmember Robertson questioned how the questions should be addressed in terms of the overall process. Mr. Stroh suggested the Planning Commission could be asked to address the questions in a separate transmittal.

Mayor Balducci suggested forwarding the questions to the Planning Commission as issues to be considered as it completes its work on the Comprehensive Plan Update. She observed it would be unusual to request a separate transmittal from the Commission responding to these specific questions. Councilmember Stokes noted that the Planning Commissions might already have discussed these issues and included them in the draft Update.

Councilmember Robinson was agreeable to proceeding as suggested by the Mayor. Mayor Balducci thanked Ms. Robinson for reviewing the meeting materials and taking the time to draft those questions.

Councilmember Lee said he believes it is important and reasonable for the Planning Commission to respond to Councilmembers' questions and concerns. He wants to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan Vision is consistent with the Council Vision. Councilmember Lee observed that the Council, and not the Comprehensive Plan, should be establishing the vision for the City. He expressed support for the newly proposed Neighborhoods Element.

Councilmember Stokes said the Planning Commission worked to incorporate key goals and priorities from the Council Vision into the Comprehensive Plan Vision. He believes the two statements are consistent with each other.

Mayor Balducci said she is pleased to see the involvement of the Boards and Commissions. She would like the Council to receive a summary of their input following the joint meeting.

Mayor Balducci thanked staff for the presentation.

(b) Recommended Refinancing of the City's 2006 (New City Building II) and the 2008 (Supplemental CIP) LTGO Bonds

Finance Director Jan Hawn said staff recommends refunding of the City's 2006 (New City Building II) and the 2008 (Supplemental CIP) LTGO Bonds. The City's financial policies require a present value savings of at least three percent of the refunding debt to justify refinancing. Ms. Hawn said the City's financial advisor has identified two bond issues for refunding that will result in a savings of approximately 6.5 percent or \$750,000 over the life of the issue.

Ms. Hawn said staff proposes refunding the two bonds in conjunction with the other three issuances previously authorized by the Council (i.e., Bellevue Convention Center Authority/Meydenbauer Center debt for capital investments, purchase of the Metro site, and the Capital Investment Program (CIP) bonds). If the Council approves moving forward, staff anticipates bringing back a bond ordinance for Council action on February 17. A draft of that ordinance is included in tonight's meeting materials.

Mayor Balducci expressed support for the proposal, noting that it will save the City a significant amount of money.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Wallace, Ms. Hawn said staff will provide a list of expenditures related to the \$80 million bond issue two years ago, which were included in the City's adopted budget.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Ms. Hawn clarified that there is considerable backup material to demonstrate the calculations forming the basis for the refunding. She noted that the City's financial consultant utilizes specific software to assist in this type of analysis and the proposal is well documented.

At approximately 8:02 p.m., Mayor Balducci declared recess to Regular Session.

Myrna L. Basich, MMC  
City Clerk

/kaw